



## Campfire Magic

Thank you to Troop 331 for this information

A good campfire can create memories that last a lifetime. To be effective and truly memorable, though, they take some planning and forethought. An effective campfire program follows a basic structure. Once you've learned this structure, putting one together is easy. What follows are some hints and ideas from Alberta's campfire leader training courses to help you plan a campfire program, deliver it smoothly, and create lasting memories.

### Planning

The structure of a campfire program is like the shape of the fire. It builds up slowly from the opening, builds to a peak, and then subsides gradually to the closing as the fire burns down to embers.

The opening includes the fire lighting and a welcoming from the Master of Ceremonies. From there quickly build up with some well known songs, a few rounds, some fun songs, some action songs, a game and stunt or two and, at the peak of excitement, skits and yells. Bring down things slowly with a few rousing songs, some quieter songs, a story, a Scoutmaster's Minute, and end with Scout Vespers. You might even include a short Scout Own at the end or invite participants to pause for a moment to listen to night sounds or reflect and be thankful. Be creative and have fun with it.

### Hints for Success

Before the event, review campfire etiquette with your group. The campfire circle is sacred and always quiet before and after the fire. Keep flashlights away from the circle. If wood needs to be added to the fire during the campfire, the patrol in charge of the campfire should be the one to do it. Keep the fire a reasonable size.

Keep the program short. For the greatest success, involve as many people as possible in the campfire as leaders of songs or yells or players in skits or stunts. If you can, audition songs and skits ahead of time to avoid any possible problems, either with difficulty or poor taste.

Choose songs you and the rest of the Troop enjoys. Stick to the familiar rather than trying to teach a new song, unless it is something really easy, repetitive, and fun. Avoid song sheets or books - a sure way to destroy atmosphere as participants turn their backs to the fire in hopes of catching some light to read the words.

Look for audience feedback. Are they singing and taking part or looking bored? Keep it alive. If a song is too slow, speed it up. If it is really dragging, simply end it and move into a "no fail" song you have up your sleeve. Set a brisk pace with minimum breaks between songs.

Keep a set of quickie yells, stunts, or songs on hand in case a person or group is not ready to perform when the time comes or you need to stop a performance for some reason. For example if, despite your screening, a group begins a skit or stunt in poor taste, stop it. Indicate simply that it is not appropriate and go on with something else. After the campfire, talk with those involved to explain the reason for your actions.

Once you've eliminated the problem of poor taste, skits or stunts can still go wrong if the players speak too quietly or position themselves badly (e.g. with backs to the audience). That's another good reason for pre-campfire auditions.

A campfire may be magic, but there's no trick to it, just good planning and some common sense.

## **Resources Available**

There are many resources available for Scouts to use when planning skits and songs. A great resource on the internet is [www.MacScouter.com](http://www.MacScouter.com). You can also access this site by clicking going onto the Troop website and clicking on the link <http://www.troop400.net/useful-stuff>.

## **The Campfire Planning Worksheet**

The Campfire Planning Worksheet is actually two pages. The planner is the first page where you plan the program. The other page is the actual program, in proper order, used by the Master of Ceremonies.

Select the fire building crew with one keeper of the flame. The keeper is the only one who can add to the fire during show. This crew usually does the clean up as well. Select a cheer master and give them an idea of how many cheers you'll want them to do. Select 2-4 boys to do run-ons between the skits. Select a Master of Ceremonies to open, direct, and close the campfire.

Have your Patrols work on skits, songs, stunts, etc. Plan a time when a representative of each Patrol will come to you with the name and type of each item that they will do. Two or three skits/songs from each patrol makes for a good program. Write them on the planner sheet side, in the appropriate place, in no particular order. Make sure that if you are not familiar with something they plan to do that you have them perform it for you -- this could avoid an embarrassing situation.

When you have all possible skits, cheers, songs -- even those that the Master of Ceremonies will lead -- written on the planning section, consider how to put them together into a program. A campfire program should start slowly and quietly, build to a high level, then taper off to a quiet closing. Bracket everything with appropriate opening and closing songs or readings. Mix up the items in the middle for variety. You might consider some stories near the end to wind things down before the closing.

# THE CAMPFIRE PROGRAM PLANNER

How to use this sheet:

1. In a campfire planning meeting, fill in the top of the "Campfire Program" sheet (over)
2. On the "Campfire Program Planner" (below), list all units and individuals who will participate in the program
3. From each get and write down the name, description, and type of song, stunt or story they have planned.
4. Select cheer master, run-ons leader, fire builders, and opener/closer.
5. The master-of-the-campfire organizes songs, stunts, and stories in a good sequence, considering timing, variety, smoothness, and showmanship.
6. M.C. makes out the campfire program sheet (over).
7. Copies of the program are given to all participants.

**Be sure that every feature of this campfire program upholds Scouting's highest traditions.**

Cheer Planner	By	Campfire Program Planner			
Need 3		Patrol or Individual	Description	Type	Spot
		Wolverine	Trouble	Skit	7
		Falcon	Fishing	Skit	6
		Davis	Don't Stop Believin'	Song	4
		Eagle	Blonde	Skit	3
		Phoenix	News Edition	Skit	5
		Jackalopes	Old Gun	Skit	8
		Geckos	God Bless America	Song	9
		NSP	Thorns/Roses	Talk	13

  

Run-ons Planner	By
Need 2 or 3	

## CAMPFIRE PROGRAM

Location: Crab Creek	Campers Notified	Set Up: Wolverines
Date: 3-19-2010	Planning Meeting	Campfire Set up: Wolverines
SM Approval	Run-on's master: Seth	Fire Tender: Mitch
	Cheer master: Jacob	Clean up: Wolverine

Spot	Title of Skit, Song, or Story	By	Time of Type
1	Opening and Fire lighting	SPL	
2	Greetings	MC	
3	Blonde	Eagle	Skit
4	Don't Stop Believin'	Davis	Song
5	News Edition	Phoenix	Skit
6	Fishing	Falcons	Skit
7	Trouble	Wolverine	Skit
8	Old Gun	Jackalopes	Skit
9	God Bless America	Geckos	Song
10			
11			
12			
13	Thorns and Roses	SPL	Story
14	Scoutmaster Minute	SM	
15	Scout Vespers	SPL	Song